

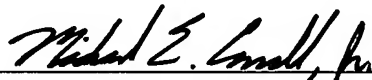
REMARKS

Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested. The present application is a Continuation of co-pending application Serial No. 09/615,397.

Additionally, Applicants have not and do not admit to any of the assertions in any prior Office Action. This preliminary amendment is being filed without prejudice to any pending or cancelled claim. Allowance of all pending claims is believed to be warranted and is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is welcomed to telephone Applicants' representative to discuss the merits of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael E. Carroll Jr.  
Attorney  
Reg. No. 46,602  
P.O. Box 489,  
Hickory, N. C. 28603  
Telephone: 828-901-6725

Date: 3/26/04